

## **ORDINANCE NO. (2019) 34**

AN ORDINANCE DESIGNATING THE **OAK GROVE CEMETERY** IN THE PLANNING JURISDICTION OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA, A HISTORIC LANDMARK

**WHEREAS**, the property located at 4303 Beryl Road, Raleigh, NC, is owned by plot owners of the cemetery; and

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina authorized the creation of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission for the City of Raleigh and otherwise provided for the preservation of certain historic sites and buildings by the passage of Part 3C, Chapter 160A, Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes; and

**WHEREAS**, the Raleigh Historic Development Commission has made an investigation and recommended the following property be designated a historic landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources has made an analysis and recommendation that the following property be designated a historic landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, on the 6th day of November 2019, a joint public hearing was held in the Council Chamber of the Avery C. Upchurch Municipal Complex, Raleigh, before the City Council of the City of Raleigh and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission to determine whether the hereinafter described property should be designated a historic landmark; and

**WHEREAS**, all requirements of Part 3C, Chapter 160A, Article 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes, preceding the adoption of this ordinance, have been complied with.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA THAT:**

**Section 1.** The property designated as Oak Grove Cemetery, in the planning jurisdiction of the City of Raleigh, North Carolina, be and is declared a Raleigh Historic Landmark. Said property being more particularly described as follows:

The property located at 4303 Beryl Road, Raleigh, NC, owned by plot owners of the Cemetery, Wake County the parcel identified by PIN number 0784924064, Real Estate ID 0114177, comprising approximately 1.25 acres.

**Section 2.** Those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological and/or cultural significance or any combination thereof are as follows:

Oak Grove Cemetery is historically and culturally significant for its association with African American ethnic heritage, social history, settlement, and community development as the burial ground of Method, one of two surviving freedmen's colonies in Raleigh. The cemetery is a reflection of the community's development, in which the four areas of significance are inextricably combined.

Oak Grove Cemetery originated ca. 1873 as the cemetery for Oak City Baptist Church, which stood at the southwest edge of the cemetery until the late 1870s. In 1937, Method citizens established the

Method Civic League and converted the cemetery into a community cemetery named Oak Grove Cemetery. As the only cemetery in the ca. 1870 freedman's village of Method, it is a literal and symbolic repository of its African American pioneers. Those buried here reflect Method's earliest period of settlement during the Reconstruction era and its growth, maturation, and burial practices in the Jim Crow era until the late 1960s period of desegregation. The documented period of significance begins ca. 1873 which is commonly believed to be the date the cemetery was established and, although the cemetery is still active, ends in 1968, as the last 50 years are not of exceptional significance.

The setting, although altered, remains peaceful and its overall layout and design remain intact. The large number of newer grave markers demonstrates the cemetery's continuing role as the only burial ground in the Method community. Within family plots, the presence of plastic flowers, small plastic fences, and other decorations such as Christmas wreaths or ribbons contribute strongly to the integrity of setting and feeling. Rural cemeteries, especially African American ones, typically featured wood or uncut fieldstone markers, which are ephemeral and easily moved, or unmarked graves. The loss of these markers over time is a normal part of a cemetery's physical evolution. Integrity of workmanship is present in the numerous locally made concrete grave markers, most of which in good condition; only a few are damaged.

Archaeological features may be an important element of the significance of the cemetery. Cemetery features documented as having information potential include the location and grouping of graves, both marked and unmarked; the use and quantity of commercial markers, fieldstone, or impermanent markers; funerary art; and inscriptions indicating identity, cultural affiliation, birth and death dates, and cause of death. Information concerning African American culture, as well as the demographic history of the Method community, can be obtained from Oak Grove Cemetery.

A detailed architectural description and history is found in the 2019 Raleigh Historic Landmark Designation application and report (National Register nomination form, and addendums) and is hereby referenced.

**Section 3.** No portion of the exterior features of any building, site, structure, or object (including windows, doors, walls, fences, light fixtures, signs, steps, pavement, paths, or any other appurtenant features), trees, nor above ground utility structure located on the hereinbefore described property that is designated in this ordinance may be altered, restored, moved, remodeled, or reconstructed so that a change in design, material or outer appearance occurs unless and until a certificate of appropriateness is obtained from the Raleigh Historic Development Commission or its successors; provided however that the Raleigh Planning Director or designee may approve certificates of appropriateness for minor works as listed in the Bylaws and Rules of Procedure of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission.

**Section 4.** No building, site, structure, or object (including windows, doors, walls, fences, light fixtures, steps, pavement, paths, signs, or any other appurtenant features), trees, nor above ground utility structure located on the hereinbefore described property that is designated in this ordinance may be demolished unless and until either approval of demolition is obtained from the Raleigh Historic Development Commission or a period of three hundred sixty-five (365) days has elapsed following final review by the Commission of a request for demolition (or any longer period of time required by N.C.G.S. 160A-400.14 as it maybe amended hereafter); provided however, that demolition may be denied by the Raleigh Historic Development Commission in the event that the State Historic Preservation Officer determines that the building, site, or structure has statewide significance as provided by N.C.G.S. 160A-400.14.

**Section 5.** The Raleigh Historic Development Commission shall have no jurisdiction over the interior features of the property.

**Section 6.** All owners and occupants of the property hereinabove described, whose identity and addresses can be ascertained by the exercise of due diligence shall be sent by certified mail a copy of this ordinance.

**Section 7.** This ordinance shall be indexed after the property owner's name in the grantor and grantee indexes in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Wake County.

**Section 8.** City administration and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission are hereby authorized and directed to have erected an appropriate sign on the site hereinabove described setting forth the fact that said site has been designated a historic landmark by action of the Raleigh Historic Development Commission and the City Council of the City of Raleigh provided, should the owners of the hereinabove described property not consent to the erection of said sign on the described premises, City administration and the Raleigh Historic Development Commission are hereby authorized and directed to have said sign located on the public right-of-way adjacent to said property.

**Section 9.** In the event any building, site, structure, or object designated by this ordinance is demolished in accordance with the ordinances of the City of Raleigh, this ordinance shall automatically be null and void.

**Section 10.** Any violation of this ordinance shall be unlawful as by law provided.

**Section 11.** This ordinance has been provided to the North Carolina Capital Commission as required by law.

**Adopted: December 3, 2019**

**Effective: December 3, 2019**

Distribution: Department of City Planning  
Development Services Department  
Raleigh Historic Development Commission  
Wake County Tax Assessor  
Property Owner and Occupant (if not the owner)  
Registrar of Deeds

Raleigh Department of City Planning  
 One Exchange Plaza  
 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
 Raleigh, NC 27602  
 919-516-2626

www.raleighnc.gov/planning

Fee	_____
Amt Paid	_____
Check #	_____
Rec'd Date:	_____
Rec'd By:	_____
Completion Date:	_____

**(Processing Fee: \$266.00 - valid until June 30, 2011 - Checks payable to the City of Raleigh.)**

**RALEIGH HISTORIC LANDMARK DESIGNATION APPLICATION**

This application initiates consideration of a property for designation as a Raleigh Historic Landmark by the Raleigh Historic Districts Commission (RHDC) and the Raleigh City Council. It enables evaluation of the resource to determine if it qualifies for designation. The evaluation is made by the Research Committee of the RHDC, which makes its recommendation to the full commission which in turn makes its recommendation to the City Council. Procedures for administration by the RHDC are outlined in the Raleigh City Code, Section 10-1053.

Please type if possible. Use 8-1/2" x 11" paper for supporting documentation and if additional space is needed. All materials submitted become the property of the RHDC and cannot be returned. Return completed application to the RHDC office at One Exchange Plaza, Suite 300, Raleigh or mail to:

Raleigh Historic Districts Commission  
 PO Box 829 Century Station  
 Raleigh, NC 27602

1. Name of Property (if historic name is unknown, give current name or street address):

Historic Name: Oak Grove Cemetery  
 Current Name: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Location:

Street Address: 4303 Beryl Road  
 NC PIN No.: 0784924064

(Can be obtained from <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>)

3. Legal Owner of Property (If more than one, list primary contact):

Name: Marion Jervay for Plot Owners of Cemetery  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Telephone No: (919) (699)-(7779) Fax No. ( ) ( )-( )  
 E-Mail: marion.jervay@gmail.com

4. Applicant/Contact Person (If other than owner):

Name: Raleigh Historic Development Commission for for Marion Jervay  
 Address: PO Box 829  
 City: Raleigh State: NC Zip: 27602  
 Telephone No: (919) (832)-(7238) Fax No. ( ) ( )-( )  
 E-Mail: rhdc@rhdc.org

5. General Data/Site Information:

Date of Construction and major additions/alterations: Period of significance: 1873-1968.  
 Significant dates: 1885, 1937

Number, type, and date of construction of outbuildings: N/A

Approximate lot size or acreage: 1.25 acres

Architect, builder, carpenter, and/or mason:

Original Use: cemetery

Present Use: cemetery

6. Classification:

A. Category (check all that apply):

Building(s)       Structure       Object       Site

B. Ownership

Private   
 Public       Local       State       Federal

C. Number of contributing and non-contributing resources on the property:

	Contributing	Noncontributing
Buildings		
Structures	1	
Objects	23	1

D. Previous field documentation (when and by whom): Listed in the National Register in 2018

E. National Register of Historic Places Status:

Check One:

Entered <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Date: 2018	Nominated <input type="checkbox"/>
Determined Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:	Determined Not Eligible <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Nomination Not Requested <input type="checkbox"/>	Removed <input type="checkbox"/> Date:
Significant changes in integrity since listing should be noted in section 10.C. below.	

7. Reason for Request: Honor and protection

8. Is the property income producing? Yes  No

9. Are any interior spaces being included for designation? Yes  No

10. Supporting Documentation (Attach to application on separate sheets. Please type or print):

A. Photographs/Slides:

At least *two sets of current exterior archival-grade photographic prints* (minimum print size 5"x7") of all facades of the building and at least one photo of all other contributing and non-contributing resources. If interior spaces of the property are being considered for designation, please include two sets of photos for these features. Prints may be created by using archival-grade black and white film photography and processing or digital photography. The minimum standard for a digital print is 5x7 at a resolution of 300 pixels per inch (ppi). This translates into a pixel dimension of 1950 x 1350. Digital images must be printed with an acceptable ink and paper combination as determined by the National Park Service Go to: <http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/publications/bulletins/photopolicy/index.htm>. All photographs must be labeled with the name of the structure, address and date the photograph was taken with pencil or archival-approved photo pen. In addition to prints, all digital images should be submitted on a CD-R in TIF format. Any additional exterior or interior views and views of other structures on the property (color, black and white, or slides) will be helpful.

B. Boundary Map:

Please include a map showing the location of the property. A sketch map is acceptable, but please note street names and number. Any other structures on the property should also be shown. Please include a "North" arrow. Map should be no larger than 11" x 17". A tax map with boundaries marked is preferred, which can be found at: <http://imaps.co.wake.nc.us/imaps/>.

C. Architectural Significance:

Describe the property, including exterior architectural features, additions, remodelings, and alterations. Also describe significant outbuildings and landscape features. If the owner is including interior features in the nomination for the purpose of design review protection; describe them in detail and note their locations. Include a statement regarding the architectural significance of the property.

D. Historic Significance:

Note any significant events, people, and/or families associated with the property. Include all major owners. Note if the property has ever been recorded during a historic building survey by the City of Raleigh or by the NC State Historic Preservation Office. If so, who and when? (See application item 6.D.) Please include a bibliography of sources. Information regarding prior designations can be found by contacting the Survey and Planning Branch of the NC State Historic Preservation Office (NCSHPO) at 919-807-6570, 919-807-6573 or at: <http://www.hpo.dcr.state.nc.us/spbranch.htm>.

E. Special Significance Summary:

Include a one to two paragraph summary of those elements of the property that are integral to its historical, prehistorical, architectural, archaeological, and/or cultural importance.

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES**

**Oak Grove Cemetery**

Raleigh, Wake County, WA2484, Listed 09/11/2018  
Nomination by M. Ruth Little, Longleaf Historic Resources  
Photographs by M. Ruth Little, January 2018



Overview from west, showing older grave markers in the central part of the cemetery



Margret Hackney, 1854-1922, marble headstone #36.

**United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

SLR APPENDED TO END OF FORM

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

**1. Name of property**

historic name Oak Grove Cemetery

other names/site number Oak City Baptist Church Cemetery

**2. Location**

street & number 4303 Beryl Road (End of Ligon Street) not for publication N/A

city or town Raleigh vicinity N/A

state North Carolina code NC county Wake code 183 zip code 27607

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this  nomination  request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant  nationally  statewide  locally. ( See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of certifying official Date

North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources  
State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria. (  See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency and bureau

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I, hereby certify that this property is:	Signature of the Keeper	Date of Action
<input type="checkbox"/> entered in the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined eligible for the National Register <input type="checkbox"/> See continuation sheet.	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> determined not eligible for the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> removed from the National Register	_____	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> other (explain): _____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____



Oak Grove Cemetery  
Name of Property

Wake County, N. C.  
County and State

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**  
(Check as many boxes as apply)

- private
- public-local
- public-State
- public-Federal

**Category of Property**  
(Check only one box)

- building(s)
- district
- site
- structure
- object

**Number of Resources within Property**  
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
0	0	buildings
1	0	sites
1	0	structures
23	1	objects
25	1	Total

**Name of related multiple property listing**  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)  
N/A

**Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register**  
-0-

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Funerary/Cemetery Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: Funerary/Cemetery Sub: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)

N/A

**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

roof N/A

walls N/A

other gravemarkers: marble, granite, concrete

**Narrative Description**

(Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

Oak Grove Cemetery  
Name of Property

Wake County, N. C.  
County and State

**8. Statement of Significance**

**Applicable National Register Criteria**

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

**Criteria Considerations**

(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

B removed from its original location.

C a birthplace or a grave.

D a cemetery.

E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

F a commemorative property.

G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions)

Ethnic Heritage: African American

Social History

Settlement

Community Development

**Period of Significance**

1873-1968

**Significant Dates**

1885, 1937

**Significant Person**

(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

N/A

**Cultural Affiliation**

African American

**Architect/Builder**

C. A. Goodwin (monument carver)

Wake Monument Company (monument fabricator)

**Narrative Statement of Significance**

(Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

**9. Major Bibliographical References**

**Bibliography**

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS)**

preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.

previously listed in the National Register

previously determined eligible by the National Register

designated a National Historic Landmark

recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Location of Additional Data**

State Historic Preservation Office

Other State agency

Federal agency

Local government

University

Other

Name of repository: \_\_\_\_\_

Oak Grove Cemetery  
Name of Property

Wake County, N. C.  
County and State

**10. Geographical Data**

**Acreage of Property** 1.25 acres

**UTM References** (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing  
1 17s 708020 3962950  
2 \_\_\_\_\_

Zone Easting Northing  
3 \_\_\_\_\_  
4 \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ See continuation sheet.

**Verbal Boundary Description**

(Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

**Boundary Justification**

(Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

**11. Form Prepared By**

name/title M. Ruth Little

organization Longleaf Historic Resources date March 28, 2018

street & number 2312 Bedford Avenue telephone 919.412.7804

city or town Raleigh state N.C. zip code 27607

**12. Additional Documentation**

Submit the following items with the completed form:

**Continuation Sheets**

**Maps**

A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

**Photographs**

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

**Additional items** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

**Property Owner**

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Owned by individual families of burial plots

street & number \_\_\_\_\_ telephone \_\_\_\_\_

city or town \_\_\_\_\_ state \_\_\_\_\_ zip code \_\_\_\_\_

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 7 Page 1  
Oak Grove Cemetery  
Wake County, North Carolina**

**Section 7: Description**

*\* Bold words and accompanying inventory numbers indicate counted resources. See the summary of contributing and noncontributing resources at the end of Section 7. The full list of grave markers is located in the Appendix at the end of the nomination.\**

Oak Grove Cemetery, officially located at 4303 Beryl Road, Raleigh, North Carolina, is an active community cemetery for the Method neighborhood, an African American village settled about 1870 3 1/4 miles northwest of downtown Raleigh. Construction of the I-440 Beltline from north to south through the area about 1965 cut off the cemetery to the west from the main Method neighborhood to the east. The 1.25 acre cemetery stands on a rise on all four sides on the edge of a research and laboratory complex to the north, south, and west owned by North Carolina State University (NCSU) and just west of the I-440 right of way. Access is via Ligon Street, a paved two-way street from Method Road, through a single-lane underpass. The cemetery is bordered to the west and south by gravel driveways. The south border is fenced with wood post and chicken wire; the east border along I-440 has a chain link fence. The original entrance at the northeast corner is still marked by a **brick pillar**, early 1960s, a **contributing object**. Few people outside of the neighborhood know of the cemetery's existence because of its isolated site. Recent cemetery signs stand along the front (north) center of the cemetery.

The cemetery's appearance is that of a heavily wooded, rural cemetery dominated by a canopy of oak trees. The only known plat map for the Cemetery was drawn by Carroll L. Mann in 1938 (Fig. 1). The roughly square cemetery measures 190 x 200 feet. Square and rectangular family plots occupy the perimeters, while the center contains sparse, randomly spaced grave markers amid large empty sections labeled "occupied space," meaning that the graves here are presently unmarked due to loss of original marker or were never marked. Most family plots are unmarked; a few have concrete block or fieldstone borders. The **network of borders**, late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, counts as **one contributing structure**. Narrow dirt walkways separate some rows. All graves are oriented east-west in the Christian tradition. A ground penetrating radar survey in 2016 identified approximately 403 graves, of which only 113 are associated with an existing marker; the remaining are unmarked.<sup>1</sup> Large oak and pine trees and small cedars shade the relatively flat terrain. The ground contains a natural growth of wild grasses, shrubs, and vines. The **overall landscape** is a **contributing site**.

Oak Grove Cemetery contains grave markers typical of late nineteenth and twentieth-century rural African American cemeteries in North Carolina. From the earliest death date of 1885 to the mid-twentieth century, graves are marked by marble headstones, commercial cast-concrete headstones, and locally made cast-concrete headstones and grave markers. Homemade vernacular concrete markers are often found in rural African American cemeteries. Twenty-two of the 113 existing grave markers discussed below contribute as primary

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<sup>1</sup> Oak Grove Cemetery Ground Penetrating Radar Survey, New South Associates, Inc. 2016.  
rhdc.org/sites/default/files/OakGroveGPRDraft.pdf

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 7 Page 2  
Oak Grove Cemetery  
Wake County, North Carolina**

resources that directly relate to one of more of the four areas of significance either by their early date or importance of individuals to the settlement or development of Method or the ability to convey African American burial practices in the South during segregation. One grave marker mentioned below is noncontributing due to age. All inventoried grave markers are keyed to the cemetery plat map (Figure 1). Their numbers correspond to the complete cemetery inventory numbers located in the Appendix.

The most historically significant grave markers are those for members of the founding families of Method: the Ligon, Wilcox, O’Kelly, Wilder, and other families active from 1885 to the mid-twentieth century, that stand in the center of the cemetery. The oldest dated grave markers at Oak Grove Cemetery is a commercially-made marble headstone for **Samuel Adkins** (1859-1885) (#82). His arched marble headstone is signed on the rear by well-known Raleigh stonemason C. A. Goodwin. Another commercial marble headstone, for **Margaret Hackney** (1854-1922) (#36) is a small pointed-arch marble grave markers. **Julia Arrington** (d. 1918) (#84) has a tall, decorative marble headstone with a cross and a crown in relief. **Luke Hill** (1849-1914) (#85) has an arched marble headstone with a cross and a crown in relief. The gravestones of **Chanie O’Kelly** (1863-1902) (#53) and **Lafayette Ligon** (1826-1891) (#54) contribute to the cemetery’s significance because they are Method pioneers, although their markers are replacement marble tablets erected years after their deaths.

Ten of the earliest headstones and grave markers are locally-made. Eight were made by an unknown local artisan. These are large grave markers with neat cast inscriptions and a rusticated finish with white paint on the sides and rear. These not only commemorate the founding families, but also represent local vernacular grave marker craftsmanship. The gravemarkers mark the graves of **Baby Wilcox** (died 1898) (# 38), infant daughter of T. H. and Irene Wilcox; and the double gravemarker of **Irenea Wilcox** (died 1904) and **Fernando H. Wilcox** (died 1905) (#37), children of T. H. and Irene Wilcox; **James Lenton** (1836-1925) (#40); **Octoria Wilder** (1896-1825—should be 1925) (#51); Infant **Willie Astor Harris** (died 1911) (#52); **Ellen Ligon** (died 1888) (#55), daughter of John and M. S. Ligon; **Squire Rodgers** (died 1920) (#80), “Father”; and **Joseph Parris** (1862-1921) (#104), husband of Cornela Parris. One other homemade concrete headstone has an embedded cross of children’s marbles. It is inscribed “**A B**” (#11), is undated, and was crafted by a later local artisan. One **uninscribed fieldstone** (#101) is a gravemarker for an unknown early individual.

Three early headstones represent commercial cast-concrete headstones from the early twentieth-century and are characteristic of North Carolina African American cemeteries. These commemorate **Ada Thomas** (died 1918) (#81); **Kemp Hill** (died 1924) (#93); and **John H. McRae** (died 1926, aged sixty-five) (#100).

From the mid-twentieth century to the present, grave markers consist of commercial granite markers with polished fronts and rusticated sides and rears. Three main shapes dominate: a large grave marker on a substantial base, a low grave marker with a slanted face, or a flush tablet. About a dozen granite grave markers contain porcelainized photographs of the deceased, a somewhat rare form of identification on gravestones in general. These types of commercial grave markers stand for those who died from the 1940s to the present, and

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
CONTINUATION SHEET**

**Section 7 Page 3  
Oak Grove Cemetery  
Wake County, North Carolina**

in some cases mark older graves. Warner Memorials, a division of Wake Monument Company, supplied many of the post-World War II granite grave markers for Oak Grove Cemetery. It has been located on the corner of Hillsborough Street and Method Road, in Method, for some fifty years.<sup>2</sup> Three of this type represent individuals of significance to Method's community development in the mid-twentieth century. **Callie McCray** (1892-1961) (#3) has a large granite headstone on a granite base with a porcelainized photograph. **Berry O. Wilcox** (1899-1964) (#21) has a low granite marker with a slanted face. **Lucy Fort** (1867-1963) (#60) has a flush granite tablet. Concrete or granite ledgers that cover the entire grave mark about a dozen graves from the late twentieth century to the present. These date from after 1968 and fall outside the period of significance. Most are commercially made, but the concrete ledger for **Rudolf Loftin Jr.** (1953-2013) (#90) was handmade by Rudolf Loftin Sr. He covered the ledger with metal and inserted plaques of the American flag and an Eagle coat of arms.<sup>3</sup>

**Summary of Contributing and Noncontributing Resources**

1. Brick pillar (early 1960s) – contributing object.
2. Overall landscape (1873) – contributing site.
3. Network of concrete block or fieldstone family plot borders (late nineteenth and early twentieth century) – contributing structure.
4. Samuel Adkins grave marker (1859-1885) (#82) – contributing object.
5. Margaret Hackney grave marker (1854-1922) (#36) – contributing object.
6. Julia Arrington grave marker (died 1918) (#84) – contributing object.
7. Luke Hill grave marker (1849-1914) (#85) – contributing object.
8. Chanie O'Kelly grave marker (1863-1902) (#53) – contributing object.
9. Lafayette Ligon grave marker (1826-1891) (#54) – contributing object.
10. Baby Wilcox grave marker (died 1898) (# 38) – contributing object.
11. Double grave marker of Irene Wilcox (died 1904) and Fernando H. Wilcox (died 1905) (#37) – contributing object.
12. James Lenton grave marker (1836-1925) (#40) – contributing object.
13. Octoria Wilder grave marker (1896-1825—should be 1925) (#51) – contributing object.
14. Willie Astor Harris grave marker (died 1911) (#52) – contributing object.
15. Ellen Ligon grave marker (died 1888) (#55) – contributing object.
16. Squire Rodgers grave marker (died 1920) (#80) – contributing object.
17. Joseph Parris grave marker (1862-1921) (#104) – contributing object.
18. "A B" grave marker (no date) (#11) – contributing object.
19. Uninscribed fieldstone grave marker (no date) (#101) – contributing object.

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<sup>2</sup> Personal interviews at Oak Grove Cemetery with Rudolph Loftin Sr., cemetery caretaker from 1968 to 2014; John Goode Sr., president of Method Boys to Men Club; and Albert Crenshaw, current cemetery caretaker, January 24, 2018.

<sup>3</sup>Rudolf Loftin Sr. interview, January 24, 2018.

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20. Ada Thomas grave marker (died 1918) (#81) – contributing object.
21. Kemp Hill grave marker (died 1924) (#93) – contributing object.
22. John H. McRae grave marker (died 1926, aged sixty-five) (#100) – contributing object.
23. Callie McCray grave marker (1892-1961) (#3) – contributing object.
24. Berry O. Wilcox grave marker (1899-1964) (#21) – contributing object.
25. Lucy Fort grave marker (1867-1963) (#60) – contributing object.
26. Rudolf Loftin Jr. grave marker (1953-2013) (#90) – noncontributing object.

**Statement of Integrity**

Oak Grove Cemetery retains a high degree of integrity of local, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, in addition to possessing demonstrable significance under Criterion A. Its setting, now altered by the 1960s construction of I-440 and the construction of the NCSU research laboratories beginning in the 1960s, has changed. However the cemetery was outside the village from its establishment, which never kept it from being an essential element in the life and death of the village. The tree line along the cemetery's east side hides the highway, and the lab complex generates very little traffic. Thus the setting, although altered, remains peaceful. Its overall layout and design remain intact. The large number of newer grave markers demonstrates the cemetery's continuing role as the only burial ground in the Method community. Within family plots, the presence of plastic flowers, small plastic fences, and other decorations such as Christmas wreaths or ribbons contribute strongly to the integrity of setting and feeling. Rural cemeteries, especially African American ones, typically featured wood or uncut fieldstone markers, which are ephemeral and easily moved, or unmarked graves. The loss of these markers over time is a normal part of a cemetery's physical evolution. Integrity of workmanship is present in the numerous locally made concrete grave markers, most of which in good condition; only a few are damaged.<sup>4</sup>

**Statement of Archaeological Potential**

Archaeological features may be an important element of the significance of the cemetery. Cemetery features documented as having information potential include the location and grouping of graves, both marked and unmarked; the use and quantity of commercial markers, fieldstone, or impermanent markers; funerary art; and inscriptions indicating identity, cultural affiliation, birth and death dates, and cause of death. Information concerning African American culture, as well as the demographic history of the Method community, can be obtained from Oak Grove Cemetery. Also, please note that cemeteries and unmarked graves are protected by North Carolina General Statutes 65 and 70, and this should be considered in any landscaping or restoration activities in the cemetery.

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<sup>4</sup> Ellen Turco, Oak Grove Cemetery, NCDOT Survey #18, 2013, <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/ER/ER-Reports/ER%2012-1317.pdf#page=72>, pages 57-58.

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**Section 8: Statement of Significance**

Oak Grove Cemetery meets National Register Criterion A at the local level in the areas of African American ethnic heritage, social history, settlement, and community development as the burial ground of Method, one of two surviving freedmen's colonies in Wake County. The cemetery is a reflection of the community's development, in which the four areas of significance are inextricably combined. Oak Grove Cemetery originated ca. 1873 as the cemetery for Oak City Baptist Church, which stood at the southwest edge of the cemetery until the late 1870s. In 1937, Method citizens established the Method Civic League and converted the cemetery into a community cemetery named Oak Grove Cemetery. As the only cemetery in the ca. 1870 freedman's village of Method, it is a literal and symbolic repository of its African American pioneers. Those buried here reflect Method's earliest period of settlement during the Reconstruction era and its growth, maturation, and burial practices in the Jim Crow era until the late 1960s period of desegregation. The documented period of significance begins ca. 1873 which is commonly believed to be the date the cemetery was established and, although the cemetery is still active, ends in 1968, as the last 50 years are not of exceptional significance. The cemetery meets Criteria Consideration D as the primary resource of Method's reconstruction era because its settlement is not represented by other extant resources in the community.

**Historical Background, Settlement and Community Development Context**

The immigration of freed slaves to North Carolina's towns after the end of the Civil War in 1865 led to the creation of freedmen's villages, all-black settlements along town outskirts, a phenomenon of the late 1860s and 1870s Reconstruction era. Five such villages developed around Raleigh--Nazareth, Lincolntown, Brooklyn, Method, and Oberlin, but only Method and Oberlin survive. Oak Grove Cemetery meets Criterion A for its local African American significance in the areas of ethnic heritage, settlement, community development, and social history. It is the burial ground of one of two surviving freedmen's colonies in Wake County (the other being Oberlin Village) and one of a small number of intact resources from Method's heyday in the late nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century. The dwellings have largely been demolished or altered. The Berry O'Kelly Historic District contains the other resources in Method that are eligible for the National Register: the 1926 Agriculture Building, 1959 Gymnasium, and athletic fields that survive from the Berry O'Kelly School, and the 1923 St. James AME Church.<sup>5</sup>

It is difficult to separate local tradition from historical fact regarding the origin of the cemetery now known as Oak Grove Cemetery. Tradition credits turn-of-the-twentieth century community leader Berry O'Kelly (1861-1931) with donating the cemetery site, but no deed from Berry O'Kelly to the people of Method for a cemetery could be located.<sup>6</sup> A church history and a published autobiography state that Oak City Baptist Church and

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<sup>5</sup> Mary Ruffin Hanbury, "Berry O'Kelly Historic District," (WA6529), National Register 2017.

<sup>6</sup> Tradition cited in Ellen Turco's Oak Grove Cemetery NCDOT Survey #18, 2013, page 57.



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Cemetery were established here in 1873.<sup>7</sup> The small, roughly built church remained in use for about five years before the congregation built a new church on Method Road.<sup>8</sup> Bertha Maye Edwards' 1974 biography, *A Little Place and a Little Girl*, noted "In the long-ago, a narrow road through this field [Big Field] was the only access to the Oak City Baptist Church Cemetery. Now that the cemetery has become the community burial ground, it is reached by a hard-surface road alongside Oak City Baptist Church through an underpass."<sup>9</sup>

Lewis Mason (1849-?), founder of Method, wrote its earliest memoir about 1914. Mason, twenty years old in 1869, learned of landowner General William R. Cox's willingness to sell lots to freedmen on affordable terms. His parents, Jesse and Candace Mason, and their friends purchased sixty-nine acres, the nucleus of the new village. Beginning in 1870, this group sold parcels to other African Americans, who built log and small frame houses that became known as Masonville. In the later 1870s, Lewis Mason explained how he obtained "the last tract of land that was sold to the Mason Village settlers."<sup>10</sup> He ran the lead mines for the late R. S. Tucker and Company, owned by Tucker, R. S. Pullen, and David M. Carter. After Carter died intestate in 1879, the Wake County Superior Court ordered the approximately fifty-acre mine tract, located west of the original village, to be sold in order to settle a suit by Carter's heirs. Mason enlisted Lewis Atwater, Merrit Wilder, James Lee, William Wilder, Eben Ketral, C. H. Woods, and others to purchase the land, and they in turn subdivided it and sold lots to other African Americans.<sup>11</sup> In the 1890s Masonville's post office was renamed Method and the name stuck.

Oak City Baptist Church began in 1865 with meetings held in various homes, and officially organized in 1873 on a hilltop site, two blocks west of Method Road. Older residents report that the church was located in the southwest corner of the cemetery. The oldest interments cluster in the center, which the GPR survey found to be full of mostly unmarked graves. The church moved to 726 Method Road in the late 1870s, at the northwest corner of the Ligon Street intersection, thus conforming to Mrs. Edwards's recollection of a paved road beside the church extending two blocks west through an underpass beneath I-440 Highway to the cemetery.<sup>12</sup>

The only known deed pertaining to the early history of Oak City Baptist Church dates October 6, 1885. By this time the church had moved to Method Road and this deed must refer to the present church site. For twenty dollars,

....on the 6<sup>th</sup> day of October 1885 the said C. H. Woods contracted to sell and convey to said Ranson

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<sup>7</sup> There is uncertainty as to the exact date but based on the age of the community and a number of unmarked mos in the oldest center section, it is likely ca. 1873, which begins the Period of Significance.

<sup>8</sup> Susan F. Wilcox, typewritten "History of the Oak City Baptist Church," ca. 1967, copy in collection of Rudolf Loftin, Sr.

<sup>9</sup> Bertha Maye Edwards, *The Little Place, and the Little Girl*. New York: Carlton Press, 1974.

<sup>10</sup> L[ewis] M. Mason, "Historical Sketch of Method." Unpublished manuscript, n.d. [ca. 1914]. Charles N. Hunter Papers, Duke Manuscript Department, Durham.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*; Todd K. Johnson and Elizabeth Reid Murray, *Wake Capital County of North Carolina, Vol. II*, Wake County, North Carolina, 2008, pages 35-37.

<sup>12</sup> Wilcox, "History of the Oak City Baptist Church, ca. 1967; Rudolf Loftin Sr. interview, Jan. 24, 2018; Edwards, *The Little Place and the Little Girl*.

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Thompson, Guilford Branch and Blake Kittle, Trustees [of Oak City Baptist Church of Masonville] the land hereinafter described...a lot or parcel of land lying and being in Wake County, west of Raleigh, adjoining the lands of said C. H. Woods, Marritt Wilder, Mrs. Mary A. Morehead and others, and bounded as follows: Beginning at a stake in Mrs. Mary A. Morehead's line, thence S88 degrees E 64 yards, to a stake Merritt Wilders corner, thence N2 ¾ degrees E 38 yards to a stake, thence N 88 degrees W 64 yards to a stake in said C. H. Woods line, thence S 2 ¾ degrees W 38 yards to the beginning, containing ½ acre more or less.<sup>13</sup>

The deed reserves the "valuable minerals and metals therein, with the privileges of mining and working for the same and removing the same over convenient passways" to Tucker, Allen and Wharton, Commissioners.<sup>14</sup> The remainder of the deed indicates that C. H. and Mary Woods purchased a tract of which this ½ acre is a part from W. H. H. Tucker, D. M. Carter and R. S. Pullen on December 1, 1878.

The earliest death dates on surviving grave markers are in the mid-1880s; earlier grave markers have presumably disappeared. The 1940 WPA cemetery survey lists a half-dozen grave markers--the earliest for **Samuel Adkins**, 1859-1885 (#82).<sup>15</sup> His arched marble headstone is signed "C. A. Goodwin," a well-known Raleigh stonecutter. The second oldest legible death date is for **Ellen Ligon** (died 1888) (#55), daughter of John and M.S. Ligon.

The cemetery became a community cemetery by 1937, when the Citizen Civic League (Method Civic League) was organized. Decades earlier, after Oak City Baptist Church moved away, the cemetery had become the defacto community cemetery of Method, but it needed management and maintenance. Surveyor Carroll L. Mann drew the 1938 cemetery map, the only known map, likely at the league's request in order to add new family plots to the perimeter of the old cemetery. One plot title has survived out of many no doubt issued: In 1939 the trustees of Oak Grove Cemetery and the Citizen Civic League, including B. M. Edwards, E. H. Lee, R. H. Edwards, J. R. Wilson, and others, deeded three plots to Mrs. Lucy Fort.<sup>16</sup> The league maintained a special cemetery fund for grass cutting and tree trimming in the late twentieth century, and presumably earlier. The cemetery gate at the northeast corner, facing Ligon Street, is now marked with a brick and concrete pillar. A second pillar at the northwest corner was destroyed in recent years by a car accident. Principal George Moore and students at Berry O'Kelly School built these pillars in the 1960s, sometime prior to the school's closing in 1966.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Wake County Deed Book 90, 409.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Copy of Oak Grove Cemetery Records, WPA Historical Records Cemetery Survey, 1940. Copy in Hallman Papers.

<sup>16</sup> Ownership title from the Oak Grove Cemetery and Citizen Civic League to Mrs. Lucy Fort, May 4, 1939. Copy in collection of Rudolph Loftin Sr.

<sup>17</sup> Edward Curtis interview, Linda Simmons-Henry and Linda Harris Edmisten, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities*, Raleigh, N.C.: Raleigh Historic District Commission, 1993, pages 8-10; C. L. Mann Survey, Oak Grove Cemetery, Method, 1938, copy in collection of Rudolph Loftin Sr.; Turco, Oak Grove Cemetery NCDOT Survey; interviews with Rudolph Loftin

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Oak Grove Cemetery has survived two major setbacks: the loss of its association with Oak City Baptist Church in the late 1870s, and its separation from the Method community by a major highway in the 1960s. After the city of Raleigh annexed Method in the 1950s, the Civic League sold its own fire truck, which they no longer needed, and purchased an \$800 lawn mower to maintain the cemetery.<sup>18</sup> In the mid-1960s when construction of the Beltline severed the cemetery's physical connection to the community, the spiritual connection continued. Rudolf Loftin Sr. served as cemetery caretaker from 1968 to 2014. As family plots were sold, he annotated names of the new owners on the 1938 cemetery plat, the official cemetery record. In the early 1970s, Method began to be absorbed into Raleigh's suburbs, but a strong core of long-time residents maintains its African American, owner-occupied, middle-class culture. Since the 1970s, a number of Method citizens have been interred around the perimeters of the cemetery, but the historic center, long since full, remains unaltered. The cemetery remains an active and important neighborhood institution.

**African American Ethnic Heritage and Social History: the Jim Crow Era and Rural African American Burial Practices**

Oak Grove Cemetery is a physical manifestation of the history of Method, segregated in both life and death. White and black cemeteries were strictly segregated throughout Raleigh's history. Segregation continued under the strict laws and social norms of the Jim Crow South from the late 1800s to the 1960s. The southeast quadrant of Raleigh's 1798 City Cemetery, reserved for the black population, is the city's oldest organized burial place for African Americans. In 1872, when the black section of City Cemetery was full, the city established the segregated Mount Hope Cemetery in southeast Raleigh for the black population. About the same time, the two freedmen's communities of Method and Oberlin Village established their own cemeteries: Oak Grove Cemetery, 4303 Beryl Road and Oberlin Cemetery, 1014 Oberlin Road.<sup>19</sup>

Historic African American cemeteries throughout North Carolina are characterized by distinctive physical qualities. Each quality reflects either tradition or socioeconomic circumstance, sometimes both: a general absence of an overall planned layout that incorporates pathways, natural rather than designed landscape, grave markers made from uninscribed fieldstones, uninscribed wood, and home-made or locally-made markers of cast concrete. These cemeteries also tend to contain a high number of unmarked graves, either because the original marker disappeared over time or the graves were never marked to begin with. Few graves are marked with commercially-made marble or granite grave markers. Family plots often have no marked borders.<sup>20</sup>

African American cemeteries in Raleigh share several common characteristics of African American cemeteries

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Sr. and John O. Goode Sr., 1-24-2018.

<sup>18</sup> Curtis interview, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities*, 9-10.

<sup>19</sup>M. Ruth Little, "Mount Hope Cemetery National Register Nomination, 2009, <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/WA3792.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> M. Ruth Little, *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers*, 248-268.

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found throughout North Carolina. Oberlin Cemetery, in the nearby Oberlin Village community is shaded by a wooded tree canopy of native oaks, cedars, magnolias and other small volunteer trees. No evidence of any deliberate plantings or lawn can be found. Only about one-quarter of known graves have markers, although many impermanent markers such as fieldstones or wood headboards may once have existed. The twenty-eight handmade or locally-made grave markers, characteristic of African American cemeteries, include fieldstone head and footstones, a wooden headboard, handmade cast-concrete grave markers, and commercially-made vernacular cast concrete markers. Few high-style Victorian grave markers exist, as their cost would have been prohibitive for most Oberlin Village families. Some of the family plot borders are home-made from concrete block or fieldstones. Oak Grove Cemetery has no wooden grave markers and only one fieldstone marker, but based on the large number of unmarked graves revealed by the 2016 ground penetrating radar survey, it is possible that markers of these two types have been lost over time. One unknown person lies under an **uninscribed fieldstone (#101)** at Oak Grove Cemetery.

Oak Grove contains two different types of grave markers from the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century—commercially-made marble markers and vernacular concrete markers. Both types characterize Raleigh's African American cemeteries and have significance in Method's ethnic heritage and social history. Grave markers often convey a person's socio-economic circumstances, place of birth, membership in fraternal organizations, and religious convictions. The following grave markers of the founding families and first generation of Method residents in Oak Grove Cemetery are the primary physical resources for Method's Reconstruction Era and later development.

The following six individuals, most listed in the 1880 and/or the 1900 census of Mason Village (Method) have surviving grave markers of commercial marble manufacture that suggest a higher economic status. **Lafayette Ligon** (1826-1891), one of the men who built the original Oak City Baptist Church in 1873, has a marble tablet (#54) that replaces his original grave marker. Method grocer Berry O'Kelly's first wife **Chanie O'Kelly** (1863-1902) has a marble tablet (#53) replacing her original grave marker. **Margaret Hackney** (1854-1922), wife of farmer Spencer Hackney, has a small pointed-arch marble headstone (#36). **Samuel Adkins** (1859-1885) worked on the railroad with his father Haywood Atkins in 1880. He is buried under the oldest dated grave marker in the cemetery, an arched marble headstone (#82) signed by well-known Raleigh stonecutter C. A. Goodwin.<sup>21</sup> **Luke Hill** (1849-1914), a laborer, has an arched marble headstone with a cross and a crown in relief (#85). **Julia Arrington** (died 1918) (#84) has a similar marble headstone to Luke Hill.

The following twelve individuals, most also listed in the 1880 and/or 1900 census of Method, have surviving vernacular cast-concrete markers. One marker type, made by an unknown local artisan who also provided markers for Oberlin Cemetery, is a blocky cast-concrete headstone or grave marker, set on a concrete base, with neat cast inscriptions. The sides and rear have a rusticated finish and are painted white. The other type are slender cast-concrete commercial headstones with neat inscriptions and sometimes cast epitaphs and decoration.

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<sup>21</sup>Little, *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers*, 215-216.

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These commercial concrete headstones, examples of which also stand in Oberlin Cemetery and Mount Hope Cemetery, as well as in both white and African American cemeteries through central and eastern North Carolina, were mass-produced, probably during the 1920s, but have death dates from the 1890s to the 1920s. They were a substitute for those families who could not afford a marble headstone in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>22</sup> Their families may have selected these headstones either because they were more affordable or because of a relationship with the unknown artisan who made them. **Octoria Wilder** (1896-1925) is buried beneath a locally-made cast concrete grave marker (#51). She is likely a relative of Merritt and William Wilder, who were among those who purchased portions of the Tucker and Company Lead Mine to enlarge the Method community in the late 1870s. Early Oak City Baptist Church leader John Ligon and his wife M.S. placed a locally made cast concrete headstone (#55) on their grave of their daughter **Ellen Ligon** (d. 1888). **Joseph Parris** (Parish), (1862-1921), son of blacksmith Henderson(?) Parish and husband of Cornela Parris, has a locally-made cast concrete grave marker (#104). T. H. and Irene Wilcox, who moved to Method from Panola County, Mississippi before 1898, marked the graves of three of their children with large locally-made cast-concrete grave markers. **Baby Wilcox**, who died in 1898, has an individual grave marker (#38). **Irenea**, who died in 1904, and **Fernando H.**, who died in 1905, have a double grave marker (#37)—the largest upright grave marker at Oak Grove. Their gravestone notes their birth in Panola County, Mississippi. **Squire Rodgers** married freed slave Amanda Rogers and had ten children, some of whose descendants still live in Method.<sup>23</sup> At his death in 1920, his family erected a locally made cast-concrete headstone (#80). **James Lenton** (1836-1925) (#40) and infant **Willie Astor Harris** (died 1911) (#52) also have locally-made cast concrete headstones. **Kemp Hill** (d. 1924) does not appear in the 1880 or 1900 census but when he died at the age of fifty-seven, he was buried beneath a commercial cast-concrete headstone with the symbol of the Oddfellows order (#93). **Ada Thomas** (died 1918) (#81) and **John H. McRae** (died 1926) (#100) also have commercial concrete headstones. A unique homemade concrete headstone with an embedded Christian cross of children's marbles has only the initials **A B** (#11) with no date.

Three individuals significant for their social contributions to Method during the early and mid-twentieth century have granite grave markers. **Lucy Fort** (1867-1963) (#60), purchased three cemetery lots from the Method Civic League in 1939. Her plot title is the only surviving title. When she died, her family erected a flush granite tablet. **Callie McCray** (1892-1961) (#3), probably related to Walter McCray, one of the organizers of the Method Civic League in 1937, is buried beneath a large granite headstone with a procelainized photograph of her as an older woman.<sup>24</sup> **Berry O. Wilcox** (1899-1964) (#21), apparently another child of T. H. and Irene Wilcox, has a low, slanted-face granite marker.

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<sup>22</sup> M. Ruth Little, *Sticks and Stones: Three Centuries of North Carolina Gravemarkers*, 242, 244.

<sup>23</sup> 1880 and 1900 U.S. Censuses, population schedule, Mason Village, House Creek Township, Wake County, N.C. www.ancestrylibrary.com. ; Wilcox, "History History of the Oak City Baptist Church; Whalen Hogan interview, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities*, 5-6.

<sup>24</sup> Curtis interview, *Culture Town: Life in Raleigh's African American Communities*, 9.

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**Section 10: Boundaries**

The boundary of Oak Grove Cemetery is the parcel shown on the accompanying 2018 Tax Map (Pin#0784924064) obtained from the City of Raleigh and Wake County Imaps, delineating the 1.25-acre cemetery at a scale of one inch = 100 feet. <https://maps.raleighnc.gov/iMAPS/?pin=0784924064>, accessed Mar. 28, 2018.

**Boundary Justification:**

The boundary includes the entire Oak Grove Cemetery as shown in the 1938 map by C. L. Mann, Jr. The square cemetery with all the marked and unmarked graves, plots, paths, trees and plantings and corner pillar associated with Oak Grove Cemetery is included in the legal tax parcel #784924064. The boundary is drawn to encompass the character-defining features of the historic cemetery. The reason for the diagonal northeast corner is unknown.



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**Photographs:**

The following information pertains to all photographs:

Photographer: Ruth Little

Date: January 2018

Location of digital images: North Carolina Historic Preservation Office, Raleigh

1. Overview from north.
2. Overview from west, showing older grave markers in the central part of the cemetery.
3. Overview from west, showing more recent grave markers and proximity to nearby I-440 in the distance.
4. Entrance pier, northeast corner.
5. Julia Arrington, died 1918, marble headstone #84
6. Margret Hackney, 1854-1922, marble headstone #36.
7. Samuel Adkins, died 1885, marble headstone #82.
8. Irene and Fernando Wilcox grave markers #37.
9. Ada Thomas concrete headstone, died 1918, #81.
10. Row of granite grave markers with porcelainized photographs #2,3,4.
11. "A B" concrete headstone, #11.

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**Appendix: Inventory of All Grave Markers**

The cemetery inventory begins at the northwest corner and ends at the southeast corner. It follows approximate rows, each numbered north to south. Rows are approximate because the sparse grave markers in the center do not conform to a grid. Transcription accuracy is supplemented by Shirley Olson's transcriptions, recorded Aug. 22, 2005 ([www.interment.net/data/us/nc/wake/oakgrove/index.htm](http://www.interment.net/data/us/nc/wake/oakgrove/index.htm)). Unusual epitaphs or such inscriptions as "Mother," "Father," "daughter," etc. are noted in text set off in quotes. Fragmented grave markers with no inscription are not included.

Row 1		
1.	Donald Russell Lee (Nov. 17, 1960-Apr. 30, 1986)	Granite headstone, porcelainized photo.
2	Roxie P. Lee (June 4, 1887-Oct. 1, 1972)	Granite headstone, porcelainized photo
3	Callie McCray (June 1, 1892-Aug. 29, 1961)	Granite headstone, porcelainized photo
4	Wiley Rogers (Died Feb. 17, 1940)	Granite grave marker with black relief ornament of grape vine with bunches of grapes.
5	Lillie Stroud Rogers (died July 4, 1968)	Low granite grave marker.
6	Leonard Rogers, Sr. (Aug. 2, 1911-Feb. 28, 1979)	Granite grave marker.
7	Wiley B. Rogers (Feb. 11, 1936-Nov. 19, 2006) and Ruth C. Rogers (Feb. 2, 1914-Aug. 28, 1994)	Double, low granite grave marker.
8	Margaret Mariah Hodges Howard Williams (Dec. 20, 1914-May 27, 1999)	Granite ledger.
9	Andrew C. Williams III (Apr. 3, 1948-Dec. 25, 1985)	Concrete ledger with stone plaque
10	Andrew Cuffie Williams Jr. (Dec. 25, 1919-Sept. 28, 1979)	Concrete ledger with cast concrete plaque
11	A B	Homemade cast pebbledash concrete headstone with a cross of children's marbles. No inscription.

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<b>Row 2</b>		
12	Nathaniel H. Lee Jr (May 24, 1956- Feb. 11, 1993)	Granite headstone with porcelainized photo
13	Bertha W. Hardin (Dec. 2, 1909- Oct. 18, 1997)	Granite headstone
14	Henrietta H Lee (Sept. 9, 1935- Nov. 6, 2000)	Granite grave marker with faded porcelainized photo, relief scene of God's hand reaching from cloud to take a pair of hands. Flanking built-in granite urns.
15	James E. Marriott Sr. (1919-1989)	"Boss Man." Concrete ledger with marble plaque
16	James E. Medlin (1945-2005)	Concrete ledger with homemade concrete plaque
17	Bobby L. Medlin (Dec. 10, 1949- Sept 19, 2007)	Granite tablet
18.	Stella F. Loftin (Mar. 25, 1922- Nov. 11, 2007)	Granite tablet
19	Lafayette Ligon (no dates)	Small marble grave marker
20	Anna Wilcox McIver (Sept. 1, 1895-Feb. 8, 1939)	Marble tablet
21	Berry O. Wilcox (Nov. 24, 1899- Nov. 11, 1964)	Granite grave marker
22	Pearl R. Hinton (Mar. 19, 1897- Feb. 8, 1989)	Granite grave marker and a concrete ledger with marble plaque
23	Martha H. Morgan (Aug. 9, 1894- July 24, 1969)	Granite grave marker
24	Mary H. Peebles (Aug. 9, 1894- Apr. 14, 1960)	Granite grave marker and a concrete ledger
25	Alice Gray (Mar. 30, 1915-Oct. 8, 1974)	Granite tablet
26	Andrew C. Williams (1890-1962)	Granite tablet
27	Fannie B. Williams (1898-1961)	Granite tablet
28	Williams	Family marble grave marker
<b>Row 3</b>		
29	Margaret Cobb (Nov. 13, 1944- May 25, 2005)	Concrete ledger with metal cover with inscription and victory wreath in relief
30	Unknown persons	Granite grave marker with missing inserts
31	Nathaniel H. Lee Sr. (May 23, 1930-July 29, 2013)	Government issue granite tablet. "PFC US Army Korea."

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32	Bernice Cobb (Nov. 15, 1963-Nov. 12, 2010)	Granite headstone
33	Marion Elizabeth White (Nov. 18, 1890-July 22, 1924)	Low granite grave marker
34	Berry O'Kelly (May 14, 1898-Aug. 3, 1993) and Claudia O'Kelly (Apr. 29, 1911-Aug. 2, 1992)	Double granite grave marker
35	Baby O'Kelly—no dates	Small marble tablet for the son of Berry O'Kelly and Marguerite Bell O'Kelly. He was born and died on Sept. 21, 1927.
36	Margaret Hackney (Aug. 11, 1854-June 12, 1922)	Small pointed-arch marble grave marker
37	Irenea Wilcox (Nov. 17, 1892-July 13, 1904) and Fernando H. Wilcox (Nov. 14, 1893-Mar. 2, 1905)	Daughter and son of T. H. & Irene Wilcox. Both children were born in Panola County, Mississippi. Large locally-made cast-concrete grave marker with white-painted rusticated finish.
38	Baby Wilcox (July 9, 1898-Aug. 16, 1898)	“Daughter of T. H. & Irene Wilcox, Method, N.C.” “The Good die young.” Locally-made cast-concrete headstone with white paint rusticated finish.
39	Edwin F. Wilcox (Dec. 27, 1907-Sept. 29, 1968)	Low granite grave marker
40	James Lenton (Mar. 1836-June 30, 1925)	Locally-made cast-concrete grave marker with white paint rusticated finish.
41	Horace L. Morgan (July 14, 1916-Mar. 23, 1961)	Government-issue marble headstone. “North Carolina S Sgt 594 Port Co. TC World War II.”
42	Ellmore Morgan (May 3, 1932-Feb. 17, 1967)	Granite grave marker. “Absent in body but present in spirit.”
43	Etta S. Morgan (1896-1979)	Granite grave marker. “Mother.”
44	Frank S. Edgerton (July 23, 1910-Mar. 10, 1997)	Low granite grave marker
<b>Row 4</b>		
45	Evelyn M. Smith (July 29, 1927-May 4, 1964)	Small granite grave marker
46	Father, Charlie, Lonnie, and Mother Atwater—no dates	Granite family grave marker with first names on small granite tablets

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47	Jethro Robert Wilson (Apr. 15, 1885-Apr. 29, 1956) and Bessie McCrae Wilson (Apr. 11, 1885-no death date)	Double marble grave marker
<b>Row 5</b>		
48	Everhardt M. Ligon (Sept. 7, 1904-June 14, 1983) and Mary A. Ligon (Aug. 23, 1901-Oct. 24, 1983)	Granite family grave marker. Relief image of an arm-in-arm couple walking into the sunset. "Beyond the Sunset."
49	Sallie Mae Vinson (died May 31, 1918)	Granite tablet
50	Easther Fort Copeland (Oct. 10, 1923-Sept. 29, 1973)	Low granite grave marker
51	Octoria Wilder (July 25, 1896-May 2, 1825 [obviously should be 1925])	Locally-made cast concrete grave marker with white-painted rusticated finish. "Dau."
52	Willie Astor Harris (Mar. 2, 1910-June 14, 1911)	Locally-made cast-concrete grave marker with white-painted rusticated finish. "TRFDT."
53	Chanie O'Kelly (July 4, 1863-July 7, 1902)	Marble tablet
54	Lafayette Ligon (Feb. 14, 1826-Mar. 29, 1891)	Marble tablet
55	Ellen Ligon (Oct. 25, 1888-Dec. 4, 1888)	"Dau. Of Jno & M. S. Ligon." Locally-made cast-concrete headstone with white-painted rusticated finish. This is the second oldest death date in the cemetery.
56	Unknown person—no dates	Granite fieldstone that has one surface dressed.
57	Unknown persons	Granite grave marker with missing plaque (possibly for Ligon family)
<b>Row 6</b>		
58	John Curtis Cobb (May 16, 1922-Jan. 15, 1980)	Granite grave marker
59	Margaret Cobb (Aug. 10, 1925-Feb. 28, 1983)	Granite grave marker
60	Lucy Fort (1867-1963)	Granite tablet
<b>Row 7</b>		
61	Michael D. Patton (1967-1985)	Concrete ledger with inset marble plaque
62	Minnie Atwater (died March 26, 1952)	Broken marble grave marker propped against marble base

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63	Addie Shaw Edwards (1903-1985)	Granite tablet. "Mother."
64	Elizabeth E. Gambrell (1921-1950)	Arched marble headstone
<b>Row 8</b>		
65	Unknown person	Small arched marble footstone with "S. _" initials
66	Emanuel Julius Wright (July 28, 1956-June 6, 2011)	Granite tablet
67	Valerie C. Cotton (Nov. 14, 1969-Feb. 9, 2000)	Locally-made concrete ledger with built-in arched cast concrete headstone, very faint handwritten inscription
68	Ann Harris Lapsley (Fb. 27, 1937-Jan. 31, 2007)	Pink granite grave marker in shape of a heart, with a porcelainized photo. "A wonderful mother, grandmother, sister & friend." Footstone "Puddin." Grave has a low metal fence border with plastic flowers and plastic butterflies.
69	Mildred Marlene Harris (Dec. 14, 1958-July 13, 1990)	Granite grave marker. "Our Darling."
70	Ammon Lutwell Harris, Sr. (Mar. 18, 1905-Nov. 10, 1962)	Granite grave marker
71	Mary Ida Harris (May 30, 1905-Sept. 30, 1978)	Granite grave marker
72	Marion Audrey Willis (Sept. 13, 1932-May 2, 1910)	Granite grave marker with a heart in relief. "Polly." "Forever in our hearts." Granite footstone "Mom."
<b>Row 9</b>		
73	Milton Thomas (died July 2, 1951)	Handmade concrete tablet
74	Dela Thomas (died Jan. 2, 1955)	Handmade concrete tablet
75	Lawrence A. Ray (July 9, 1969-Sept. 18, 1994)	Bronze tablet with dogwood blooms in relief
76	Mary Pearl Thomas (June 25, 1904-Feb. 11, 1969)	Large arched marble grave marker
77	Georgianna McCullers (Jan. 16, 1886-Set. 18, 1972)	Low granite grave marker
78	Ida O. Thomas (June 8, 1888-Nov. 9, 1974)	Granite grave marker
79	Thelma Thomas Wynder (Jan. 22, 1909-June 23, 1992)	Granite grave marker and a concrete ledger with marble plaque insert

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80	Squire Rodgers (Dec. 1, 1920)	“Father” Locally-made cast concrete headstone with white-painted rusticated finish
81	Ada Thomas (died June 19, 1918)	“Honored, beloved and wept, here Mother lies.” Commercial cast-concrete headstone and footstone.
82	Samuel Adkins (Dec. 4, 1859-Feb. 19, 1885)	Arched marble headstone, lying face down. “C. A. Goodwin,” stonecutter’s signature, on the rear. This is the oldest legible death date in the cemetery.
83	Hubert Cotton (died March 26, 1927)	Government-issue marble headstone. “North Carolina Pvt. 810 (?) Pioneer Inf.”
84	Julia Arrington (died May 27, 1918)	Tall decorative marble headstone with a relief of a cross with a crown.” “Our dear Mother.”
85	Luke Hill (Aug. 5, 1849-Apr. 19, 1914)	Arched marble headstone with a relief of a cross with a crown. “Our loving father, devoted husband.”
86	Mattie H. Dunn (May 4, 1890-Mar. 22, 1962)	Granite grave marker with porcelainized photo.
87	Roosevelt N. Hill (Apr. 6, 1901-Nov. 26, 19__)	Concrete ledger with marble inset plaque with wear.
<b>Row 10</b>		
88	Willie M. Smith (Nov. 25, 1904-Feb. 24, 1985)	Granite grave marker
89	Annette Hogan Anders (July 18, 1937-Sept. 5, 2003)	Granite tablet with angel in relief. “Our sister.”
<b>Row 11</b>		
90	Rudolf Loftin Jr. (June 13, 1953-2013)	Concrete ledger with metal cover with inset plaque with colored American flag and an Eagle coat of arms at the top. Military insignia?
91	Joseph Hinnant (Aug. 10, 1952-July 13, 2016)	Granite grave marker with built-in granite urn. “Husband.”
92	John Fletcher Snipers, Sr. (Feb. 2, 1899-Oct. 3, 1973)	Concrete ledger with marble plaque inset
93	Kemp Hill (Died Apr. 30, 1924)	Age 57 years. Commercial cast-concrete headstone with anchor and ivy in relief at top, along with Oddfellows symbol “F. L. T.”
94	S. Jackson Pope Jr. (1893-1955) and Amanda B. Pope (1893-1970)	Doubled granite tablet

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95	Wilbert J. Pope (1919-1991)	Government-issue marble tablet. "PFC U.S. Army World War II."
96	Margaret Pope Thomas (Nov. 4, 1927-Jan. 10, 1984)	Granite tablet
97	Martha A. Pope (Jan. 31, 1922-May 23, 1989)	Granite tablet
98	Thady G. Peacox (Apr. 11, 1899-Apr. 18, 1983)	Concrete tablet with marble plaque inset
99	Unknown person	Granite grave marker with no inscription
100	John H. McRae (died Jan. 18, 1926)	Age 65 years. Commercial cast-concrete headstone lying in 3 pieces in the ground
101	Unknown person	Uninscribed fieldstone. This is the only fieldstone in the cemetery that seems to be a grave marker
102	Doris Ernestine Clinton (Oct. 24, 1925-Feb. 26, 2005)	Concrete ledger with a metal cover containing inscription and Psalms 23 in cast black lettering
103	Unknown person	Locally-made cast concrete grave marker with white-painted rusticated finish. Inscription is illegible
104	Joseph Parris (1862-July 18, 1921)	Husband of Cornela Parris. Locally-made cast-concrete grave marker with white-painted rusticated finish
105	Mamie B. Marrow (Aug. 26, 1939-Aug. 30, 1989)	Granite tablet. "Mother."
106	Elizabeth P. Griffin (July 1, 1909-Nov. 22, 1981)	Granite tablet. "Mother."
107	Minnie Sills (Dec. 14, 1914-May 11, 1960)	Daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Sills. Granite grave marker
108	Beatrice P. Cole (1909- ) and James F. Cole (1908-1969)	Double granite tablet
109	Theodore W. Harris (1891-1962)	Granite tablet
110	Wilbertine H. Sills (1920-1961)	Granite tablet
111	Ethel B. Harris (1892-1949)	Granite tablet
112	John Sills (Nov. 8, 1920-Apr. 2, 1955)	Granite grave marker
113	Carol L. Harris (1914-1967)	Granite tablet



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**Oak Grove Cemetery  
Wake County, N.C.**

Other Inventoried Resources

1. Brick pillar (early 1960s)
2. Overall landscape (1873)
3. Network of concrete block or fieldstone family plot borders (late nineteenth and early twentieth century)

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# National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Property

\_\_\_\_\_  
County and State

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of multiple property listing (if applicable)

Section number \_\_\_\_\_ Page \_\_\_\_\_

## SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 100002930

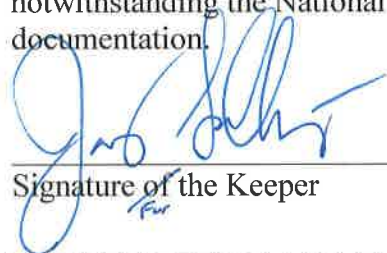
Date Listed: 9/11/2018

Property Name: Oak Grove Cemetery

County: Wake

State: NC

-----  
This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

9.11.2018

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

-----  
Amended Items in Nomination:

### Section 8: Cultural Affiliation

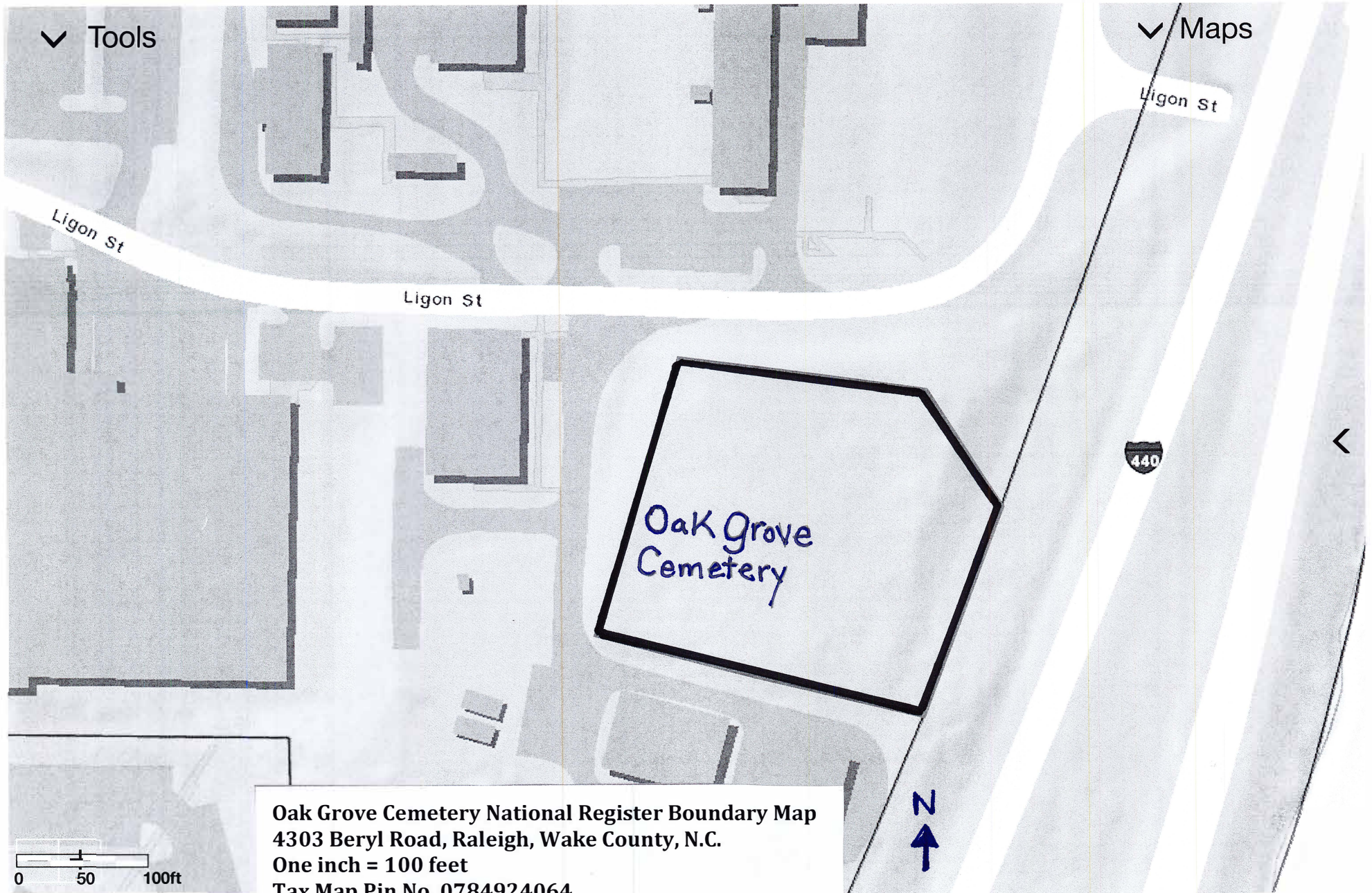
African American is hereby deleted as a Cultural Affiliation. Criterion D is not cited

\_\_\_\_\_  
The North Carolina SHPO has been notified of this amendment.

### **DISTRIBUTION:**

**National Register property file**

**Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)**



**Oak Grove Cemetery National Register Boundary Map**  
4303 Beryl Road, Raleigh, Wake County, N.C.  
One inch = 100 feet  
Tax Map Pin No. 0784924064  
UTMs: 17s 708020 3962950

**— National Register Boundary**

^ Overview



Fig. 1. 1938 Plat of Oak Grove Cemetery, 4303 Beryl Road, Raleigh, Wake Co., N.C.  
 Drawn by C. L. Mann, Jr.  
 Private Collection of Rudolph Loftin Sr.  
 Gravemarkers keyed to map by cemetery inventory list numbers. All markers are contributing except for No. 90, which is noncontributing.  
 National Register Photo Key 1)- 11)

190 ft. x 200 ft.

OAK GROVE CEMETERY  
 METHOD  
 NEAR RALEIGH, N.C.

## Oak Grove Cemetery Landmark Designation Report Addendum

November 13, 2019

### Location:

Officially, Oak Grove Cemetery is located at 4303 Beryl Road. However, its actual location is on a rise west of the I-440 right-of-way (ROW) and north of the Western Boulevard exit. It is accessed by turning west on Ligon Street from Method Road and going through the I-440 underpass. The parcel is located at the south end of a complex of research and laboratory buildings owned by North Carolina State University (NCSU).

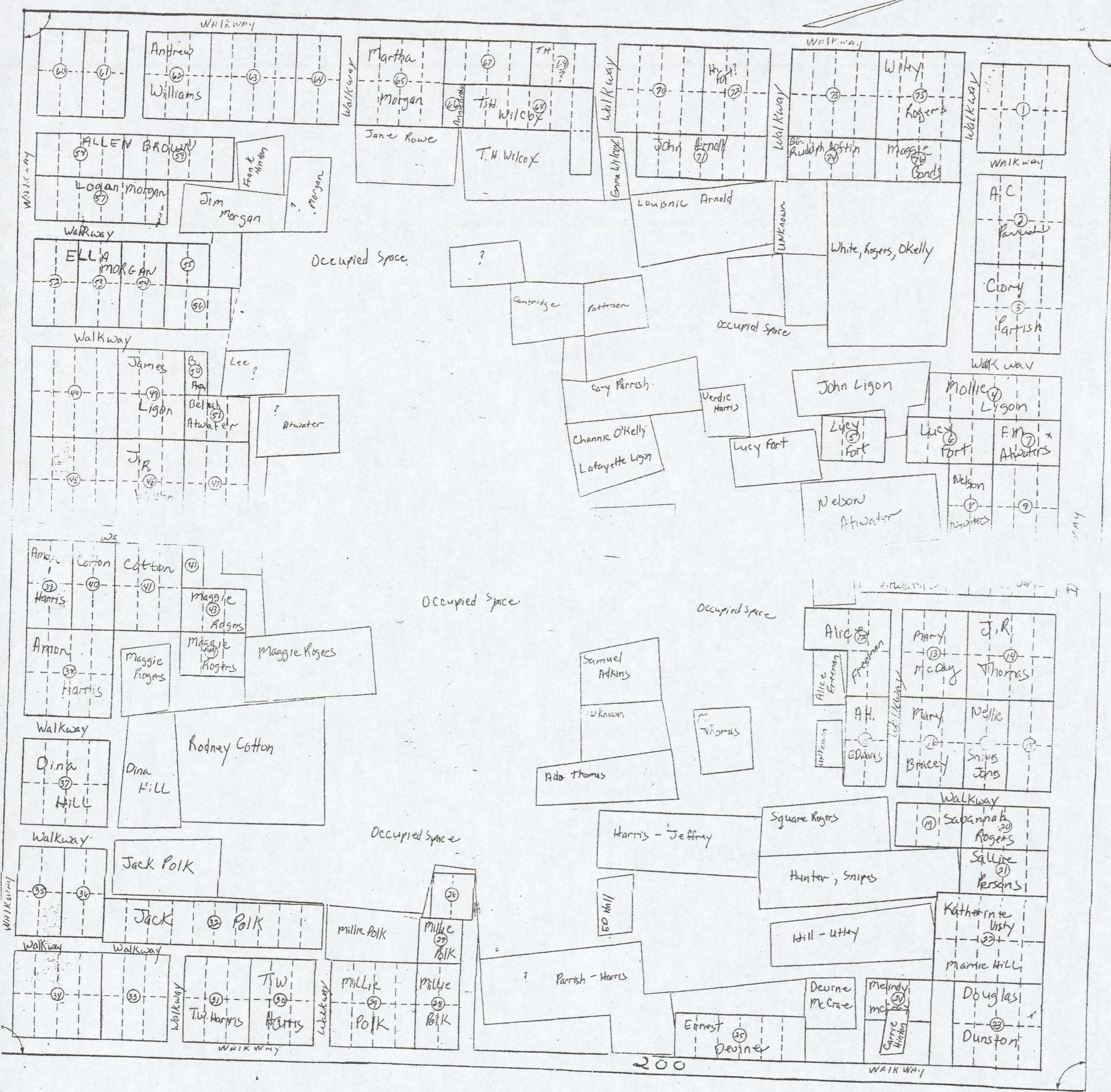
### Description:

There have been no changes to the site since listing in the National Register of Historic Places in 2018.





Survey map of Oak Grove cemetery prepared by Carroll Mann, Jr., dated 1938



date All graves size 4x10

190 X 200

OAK GROVE CEMETERY  
METHOD  
NEAR RALEIGH, N.C.